

Summation of the NASSS International Graduate Students Seminar Plenary Session Workshop

YAMAGISHI Takakazu (SESSION PRESIDERS)

NANZAN UNIVERSITY

The plenary session for the International Graduate Student Seminar, conducted at 9:00 am on July 26, 2010, was presided over by Professor Takakazu Yamagishi. This session was attended by two keynote speakers, Professor Robert J. McMahon and Professor Marianna Torgovnick, as well as by the three professors from the ASPAC region--Professor Yu-cheng Lee, Professor Kouzar J. Azam and Professor Ricardo T. Jose. The session was conducted in two parts. Part one focused on the question, "How to Succeed in Academic Life." In the second part, all students have a five-minute presentation on their projects. Both sessions were conducted in a round-chair format, which gave the participants an intimate feeling.

The first session was opened by the Vice President of Nanzan University Professor Noboru Kinoshita. Then, Professor Yamagishi asked the keynote speakers and ASPAC scholars to share their experiences about how they chose their dissertation topic, as well as the system that was utilized in developing it further. Professor Azam claimed that it is important for students to choose a dissertation topic that they are passionate about. Professor Lee talked about timetable throughout academic life and in securing sources of literature from other countries especially if one is competent in that foreign language. Professor Jose emphasized the student's interest, creativity, framework, and the enjoyment of doing research. All professors agreed that student should not be overly concerned with the future job market.

Afterward, we spent time to discuss about how the professors advanced in their dissertation writing. Professor Yamagishi shared his experience that he set his own rule to write three pages every day, which gave him a feeling of achievement at the end of the day. Professor Azam took a different strategy. She wrote her dissertation as much as possible when she felt good. Professor McMahon emphasized that students should have time constraint to enhance their writing. People cannot tackle dissertation in 24 hours, and the more time they have, the less productive in writing they can be. Professor Torgovnick suggested that students must have some other things in their lives to do so that they will have small deadlines in their dissertation writings. Almost all professors agreed that

interest, time management, and small accomplishments will help in obtaining the degree in due time. Although how to advance in the future career depends on the person's personality and other aspects of life, all professors agree that students should have a certain rule for themselves.

In conclusion, the floor was opened, and graduate students were able to ask the professors on questions about their own choices and decisions throughout their career. Students benefited from this session not only because they learned about dissertation writing skills but also because prominent professors have had the same rough experiences as they are having now.

The second half of the plenary session was used for students to present their own works to all participants and to have feedbacks from them. This session did not exist in the past years. But to respond on the feedback by the previous years' participants, we concluded that it would be better to let the students know all the participants' study interest as early as possible in the seminar. This plan was successful. The students continued to talk about their projects during the excursion which took place in the afternoon.

Overall, the plenary session made a relaxing mood for the participants so that they could actively interact. Especially, this year was more successful because, unlike in the previous years, all students had an opportunity to present their projects in front of all participants. The session concluded at 12:00 pm.